



FRIDAY, DECEMBER 17

LOVE HAS COME - STANZA 1

Love has come—a light in the darkness!  
Love shines forth in the Bethlehem skies.  
See, all heaven has come to proclaim it;  
hear how their song of joy arises:  
Love! Love! Born unto you, a Savior!  
Love! Love! Glory to God on high.

— Text: Ken Bible, b. 1950

This morning I woke up early and built a fire in our woodstove. I didn't want to turn on a light. I scrounged for kindling using the eyes of my fingertips in the wood bin. Once the logs burned, the fire gave off just enough light to see the ink on the pages of my notebook.

My kids are sleeping like only two growing boys can, and my adoring dog is resting her head on my arm as I write this. I think of Mary and Joseph, who must have also woken up early to kindle a fire on many cold dark mornings while their growing children slept. Despite the hardships and injustices they endured they practiced love. Jesus' mother unconditionally loved him from the beginning. He tenderly loved his mother and extended that love and respect to all women. Jesus' dad fiercely protected his family from threats of harm - uprooting their lives to immigrate to a different country where they could be safe. Jesus became a fierce protector of the immigrants and those who had no place to call home. Jesus learned not only to love his family, but to love those people on the margins, the people no one else saw or cared about.

It's just a little wood stove, but it lights the room with a steady glow. Soon I will wake my boys and remind them they are seen and loved. Jesus shows us how love in practice threatens a fragile empire of domination. Although it feels like an all-consuming darkness, love is here for us to kindle and grow. Those of us who are tending a fire of abundance are asked to share with those who are rarely seen, who rarely feel the warmth and light of love. It is my dream that everyone finds warmth in that glow of love and belonging. When I experience that loving community, I don't have a need for the false security of things, wealth and domination. When we all finally one day experience that loving community the empire will have no power over us, and we will all be free to love, serve, and celebrate. I'm sure the angels will sing then, too.

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